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ABSTRACT

The two concepts of individualized instruction in reading, prescriptive individualized instruction (IPI) and the individualized reading program (IRP), differ in the nature of their structures. The IPI program involves a progressive sequence of learning tasks which are accomplished at an individual's own rate. The IRP involves exploration and individually determined direction and goals as well as individual rate. The success of an individualized reading program depends on the success of six steps in the program: (1) a classroom environment for productive reading, (2) silent or quiet reading time, (3) instructional guidance including noninterference, (4) book talks and conferences, (5) uninterrupted sustained silent reading practice, and (6) record keeping and evaluation. How each of these steps can be accomplished by the classroom teacher is discussed. (AL)

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL BASES FOR INDIVIDUALIZED READING

by

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IPI - What is your instant response? And to IRP? Are there similarities evoked by the I in both cryptic symbols more pronounced than the differences? The acronyms IPI and IRP are not merely two different expressions for the same basic concept, namely individualization of reading instruction. Whether reference is made to IPI or to IRP makes a difference and the significance of the difference lies in the P. Is your first reaction to P the word "Prescribed?" or does the P make you think of "Personalized" reading instruction? "Prescribed" or "Personal" are very different forms of individualization.

Many within the profession have not sorted out confusions which result from referring to individualized instruction - whether it be "Prescribed" or "Personal" as one and the same educational construct. To use the concept named "Prescribed" in one instance or "Personal" in another interchangeably perpetuates existing confusions. Consequently, clarification by distinguishing between the two forms of individualization is needed.

IPI vs IRP

Individually Prescribed Instruction (IPI) expresses the qualities and values which are typically more closely associated with the cognitive domain. The emphasis in this educational endeavor is on academic accomplishment, and on the mastery of skill sequences as evidenced by performance on pre and post-check tests. By contrast the personal part of Individual Reading Program (IRP) is far more representative of values found within affective domain. Attitudes, values, and interest play a major role in IRP. When successfully executed, IRP leads to four unique educational values as far as teaching reading is concerned. These are:

1. Exploratory Reading and Learning
2. Sustained Silent Reading and Study
3. Independence and Self Direction in Reading and Learning
4. Love of Books and Reading

In reality neither IPI nor IRP is implemented in pure form. Teachers, caught between the two basic philosophical and psychological forces which energize the educational world, are forced to compromise. Consequently, in actual classroom practice the two are usually well mixed. Differentiating between "Prescribed" and "Personal" instruction becomes for practical purposes a matter of degree. However, the theoretical differences in emphasis are very real and it is valuable to highlight them. Reading teachers must know these differences. These contrasts

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can perhaps best be shown in the following form.

TERMINOLOGY REPRESENTING DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

PRESCRIBED INSTRUCTION (IPI)	PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION (IRP)
1. Continuous Progress	1. Discovery Learning
2. Sequential Skill Mastery	2. Learning to Learn
3. Academic Achievement	3. Personal Growth
4. Programmed or Computerized Instruction	4. Self Direction
5. Systems Analysis	5. Individual Productivity
6. Behavioral Objectives	6. Self Selection
7. Performance Contracting	7. Interest Centered
8. Pre and Post Tests	8. Discovery Exploratory Learning

THE QUESTION OF STRUCTURE

In most reading programs, characterized as prescribed or programmed, the detailed, comprehensive, and systematic structure is highly visible within the materials and the manuals. The same may be said of the typical basal reading textbook series which in reality is but an unrefined version of programmed or prescribed instruction. The fact of structure is self-evident. Frequently it is overwhelming.

Perhaps this analogy will help. Prescribed instruction can be likened to a section of a railroad track with the initial and terminal points well marked. One can recollect as a toddler walking the endless series of ties wherein each step is evenly spaced. The task for the toddler demands that each step be taken in turn without making missteps; getting caught between the ties is thus avoided. Anyone is immediately aware of any false step, of catching a foot between the ties, so scrambling back up to take the next intervalled step is not too difficult. The steps are small, equally easy to make so that steady progress can be made toward the end point. Clearly the steps needed to reach the destination are well marked in Programmed or Prescribed instruction. Individualization rests merely in the pace or the rate of accomplishment of the predetermined steps. No truly personal diversions are permitted.

By contrast IRP can be thought of more in the image of a spider web. Here we have an inner core surrounded by a series of concentric circles interlaced by fine lines or strands extending to these outer circles. The concept is one of continuously moving outward, multidimensionally from this inner core. The idea is one of expanding increments along radial lines in various directions. The implication of exploration is inherent in the concept. The straight line rule does not fit in this setting. Individuality is thought of in terms of direction as well as of pace.

The contention, however, that IRP is unstructured is not true. That its structure is delicate and finely meshed is closer to reality. Granted there is a fragile quality to this structure. It is easily destroyed or wiped away as is the case with the cobweb.

IRP structure, however, lies much more in the teacher's mind than in her teacher's manual. The secret for success in this personal approach is transferring the structure from the mind of the teacher to the mind of the child. Unless the structure is clear and constant for the teacher she will be less than successful with IRP. In this approach the young readers gradually learn how to command themselves within this relatively open netlike arrangement.

The O + S = P formula may help the teacher to create in her mind the necessary structure for IRP. The O in the formula pertains to openness, the idea of self-direction and personal involvement based on interest. S stands for stability. Unless stability is maintained within the classroom, productivity (P) is reduced. Too many teachers have attempted IRP only to retreat because of the S in the formula. The fragile, netlike structure is too frequently tangled. The burden of the balance of this paper is to stress the S in the O + S = P formula. For Stability is the key to successful IRP. The structure in IRP is governed by this concept.

SIX STEPS TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

There are six identifiable steps to an Individualized Reading Program which, when followed successfully by the teacher, will lead to productive reading. Positive results are obtainable through IRP only when there is not too much stumbling on any of these steps. Teachers must understand each step and its relative importance to the total program of individualized reading.

The six steps are:

1. Classroom environment - an atmosphere for productive reading.
2. Silent or quiet reading time - how to behave in reading class.
3. Instructional guidance - principle of non-interference.
4. Book talks and conference time - what should or should not be.
5. Skill development: USSR - the epitomy of reading skills.
6. Records and evaluation - for benefit of learner.

The structure of IRP which the teacher must carry in her mind is derived from this framework. Proper development of this framework will prevent stumbling on the steps; teachers thus will avoid pitfalls in their efforts to build stronger classroom reading programs.

1. The Reading Atmosphere Within the Classroom

The first step, which is basic to success, is to build a climate for productive reading. Building this atmosphere for reading takes careful nurturing; it also takes time. Each teacher's goal must be to develop productive silent reading on the part of each pupil. It is easy to make the mistake of leaving atmosphere to chance or of taking it for granted. This can be

fatal to IRP. Building a climate for reading requires both endurance and endeavor on the part of the teacher. Two key factors for creating this climate are: (1) The concept of Quiet Reading Time and (2) skillful use of Instructional Guidance.

2. Quiet or Silent Reading Time

The concept underlying silent reading time is vital to developing IRP successfully. Each teacher must clearly perceive legitimate activities permissible during the Silent Reading Period. The ideal model has each reader directing his own activities with printed material throughout the duration of the reading period. The perfect situation requires that everyone be so engaged in silent reading (or working on responses thereto) that the teacher is free to interact with pupils in a variety of ways, individually, or in groups. A chart giving the framework or structure of the silent reading time helps. The chart should be very visible to each and every incipient reader. A sample chart could read:

Quiet Reading Time

1. Select book or other printed material
2. Read quiet (see how much you can get done)
3. Have a book talk or conference (be prepared - know what to say)
4. Record your results - write about reading, chart your progress
5. Study vocabulary
6. Work with a partner.

The behavior of the reader is markedly different in IRP from that which he has used in the text program. Each must learn new ways of behaving. While natural for many, this new pattern is difficult for some. Some will need time and patient guidance to success. Pupil success in IRP means:

1. Making wise and intelligent selections of reading material.
2. Spending large blocks of time in independent silent reading.
3. Preparing for and being ready to make his best contribution during the conference time.
4. Preparing reports, keeping records, and being ready to share his learning from books with others.

Teachers err in not giving sufficient time and effort to establishing the framework for the quiet reading period. Teachers frequently are too eager to move to conferences and book talks, leaving the silent reading to care for itself. The chances are that it won't. Moving too quickly to conference activities frequently doens't work. Many young readers need constant and considered instruction in sustained silent reading prior to gaining the self-direction needed to make conference time worthwhile. Initially, some young readers need Instructional Guidance more than they need book talks.

3. Instructional Guidance

Serious reading covering long stretches of print is not taken seriously by some. Many boys and some girls prefer to spend silent reading time in more noisy endeavors. The gossips, those who prefer talking to reading, are common. The wanderers, those active individuals (mostly boys) who would rather walk around than read, need considerable attention. The wanderers usually spend excessive amounts of time searching for suitable reading material. When pressed to settle down to productive reading, 101 excuses are forthcoming for not doing so. "Squirrels" collect books as their animal counterparts do nuts. "Squirrels" get a new book each day but are too busy gathering them to take time to read them. For them, the reading time is unproductive; little

silent reading is completed.

Every teacher who tries IRP has gossips, wanderers and squirrels in varying degrees. Productive reading is most difficult for these children. Typically about ¼ of the total group exhibit such evasive behaviors. These avoidance activities must be minimized. IRP cannot succeed unless the teacher first works at moderating, if not overcoming, disruptive behaviors. This is where instructional guidance is needed. And this is precisely where many teachers fail.

The guiding principle, which should be held inviolate, is as follows:

DURING THE READING PERIOD NO ONE MAY ACT SO AS TO INTERFERE WITH THE PRODUCTIVE READING OF ANOTHER. This means no interruption of one reader by another unless this interaction contributes in some way to the productivity of both. Much legitimate interaction occurs among various readers. This is as it should be. But this decree also means occasionally telling some to SIT DOWN, KEEP QUIET AND START READING.

The principle of non-interference of others and high productivity by each must be firmly established. IRP cannot succeed without it. Yet the teacher who finds this precept violated no more than a dozen times a day should not be discouraged. The teacher can err only by not attending to the problems which arise and by not working to ameliorate them. Little by little the wanderers, gossips and squirrels become readers. The basis for successful IRP has been established. Instructional guidance is crucial to creating the atmosphere of a successful Quiet Reading Time. The rule of non-interference must work.

4. Book Talks and Conferences

The Silent Reading Time, with the atmosphere of productive reading created by it, is the heart of IRP. Similarly conference time with book talks is the heart of the Silent Reading Time. Through book talks the teacher plays a key instructional role. This role must be clearly understood; otherwise efforts to build IRP will falter. In the past the role of the teacher in book talks has been poorly defined; consequently serious mistakes have been made.

First, some possible errors. Teachers must not think of the first purpose of book talks as interrogating each and every reader about each and every book read. To do so is self-defeating for both teacher and reader. To the contrary the concept that extensive reading developed within IRP is exploratory in nature (i.e. searching far and wide in print of all sorts for important ideas) must be understood by both reader and teacher. Consequently, to be successful, book talks must be based on sampling techniques. The idea of searching for prints is paramount. The teacher takes samples of each student's accumulated reading. Certain parts of some books are discussed; not all parts of all books. Through conversation with readers, the teacher helps to focus on key ideas that readers have gained through a variety of situations. To think of checking thoroughly all reading is disastrous. Thorough questioning of material read should be reserved for intensive reading which accompanies the textbook reading program; it should not be duplicated in IRP. Endeavoring to do so has been the downfall of many teachers.

Second, the conference time ought not to be used for checking oral reading

errors. To think of the teacher's role as that of listening to individuals read orally is self-defeating for IRP. Again this can better be accomplished within the context of the textbook program with its oral reading groups. Teachers who try to carry the practice of oral reading checks over to the conference time of IRP find themselves overwhelmed and quickly turn back from IRP.

The essential purpose of book time is to enable each reader to reveal the significance of his reading experience. The role of the teacher is to enable the reader to convey the true meaning for him of what has been read. The key to book talk time lies in the questioning used by the teacher. Perceptive, penetrating questions can give insight relatively quickly into the depth of reading. Here reference is made to three articles wherein these concepts related to book talks have been thoroughly developed.

1. Hunt, Lyman C. Jr., "The Key to the Conference Lies in the Questioning," Educational Comment on Individual Reading, H. Sandberg, ed., The University of Toledo, College of Education, Toledo, Ohio. 1966.

2. Hunt, Lyman C. Jr., "Evaluation Through Teacher-Pupil Conferences," The Evaluation of Children's Reading Achievement, T. Barrett, ed., Perspectives in Reading No. 8, International Reading Association, Neward, Delaware, 1967.

3. Hunt, Lyman C. Jr., "A Grouping Plan Capitalizing on the Individualized Reading Approach," Forging Ahead in Reading, J. Allen Figurel, ed., Part I, Proceeding of the Twelfth Annual Convention, International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1968.

5. USSR: The Pinnacle of Reading Skills

Every teacher of reading should think of USSR as the pinnacle of achievement with regard to teaching skillful reading. USSR in this regard has nothing to do with our friendly Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is purely coincidental that the initials for this most paramount of all reading skills are identical with those of the Russian country. In this instance the initials stand for UNINTERRUPTED SUSTAINED SILENT READING.

USSR pertains to the relativity among reading skills. Basic to the concept is the consideration that silent reading is far more significant than is oral reading. Basic to the concept is the belief that contextual reading is of greater importance than are the skills of recognition at the word/letter level. Basic to the concept is that the greatest reading skill to be achieved is that of sustaining silent reading over long stretches of print without interruption and without breaks. USSR cannot be achieved unless the reader has the facility to keep his mind on and flowing with the ideas.

USSR, then, is the skill which signals that the student is able to read by himself, and for himself over long spans of print. Each reader must realize that his purpose in the silent reading time is to get as many of the important and significant ideas as he can through silent reading. In USSR reading is regarded as a detective-type activity. Specifically this means that the reader is not held accountable for every single idea contained in every single sentence or parts thereof. Specifically this means that the reader is oriented to search the material for ideas which are of relatively great importance, i.e., ideas of relative importance as contrasted with detail and facts of lesser importance. His task is to search out ideas that matter - ideas that make a difference.

This requires a radically different orientation to comprehension than that conveyed to the reader by the majority of current textbook programs. Both teacher and reader must understand that reading comprehension is making a series of judgments about the worthwhileness of the ideas - not remembering and repeating all that has been read.

USSR can be taught. Productive reading can be strengthened by helping each reader to realize that success means learning to sustain himself with print for longer and longer stretches of time. Any device the teacher wishes to use to help the readers attain this goal is in order. Various instructional devices help youngsters to keep track of the amount of silent reading accomplished during the reading period, i.e., through charts, or through graphs or through any scheme of time-keeping which will make progress visible. Another approach is for the teacher to sit with groups in the reading circle and supervise or govern their silent reading. Here the teacher's role is simply to support and assist each youngster as he tries to get as far as he can with his printed material during his time in the reading circle. There is no oral reading around the circle; oral reading is confined to having individual students verify ideas. The teacher helps with words; she assists in interpreting sentences; but more than anything else, she simply establishes the setting so that maximum amounts of silent reading can be completed by each child. The teacher helps each child to extend his own previous limits through day-to-day practice.

The USSR concept has significant implications for work with youngsters at the lower end of the reading scale. A gross and tragic mistake has been attempting to teach the low group readers through oral reading. The erroneous practice has been trying to get those in our low groups to sound as good while reading orally as do those in upper groups. Then, the theory goes, each will somehow become an independent reader. This approach has not worked and <u>can not</u> work. Just attempting to reach relatively high degrees of oral reading fluency first is going at akill tasks backwards. Helping a young reader develop power of silent reading is the first priority. Teachers should make the silent reader first, and then the oral reader, not the other way around as we are currently doing. Teachers can make silent readers first if a premium is placed on doing so; fluency in oral reading will then follow naturally. More than anything else, we must realign our priorities with regard to basic reading skill areas.

<u>Record Keeping</u>

Teachers who are developing the individualized approach to reading instruction have found it necessary to devise ways for keeping records of the children's development in reading. Some find that a card or notebook page for each child can be easily used to record notes during the pupil conferences. Others use a more formalized checklist on which the teacher periodically records observations concerning the children's performances and abilities. Such records serve as a guide for planning and a basis for reporting to parents on the child's progress.

Such record keeping is all to the good; however, some teachers get "hung up" on keeping track of things. Compulsive record keeping can be fatal for IRP. If keeping records, keeping track of books, answering questions or writing resumes on books read, take more time than is spent by readers reading then the teacher has become lost - lost in non-essentials.

Realistically, teachers who are good record keepers will keep good records while teachers with messy desks and messy rooms will not. Similarly, young-

sters who are high powered readers and who are well-ordered will maintain good records. Conversely, low powered readers and those with sloppy habits won't even be able to find the papers on which their records are kept. So be it. The object of the program is productive reading, not neat notepads filled with records.

And Evaluation

Where the goal is that of making independent, self-sufficient and self-sustaining readers, evaluation becomes a complex matter. The evaluator must know many aspects of each child's reading. It is not enough to know whether or not each word is known. It is not enough to check on oral reading fluency. The teacher must see beyond having students answer ten questions correctly following the reading of a short passage.

The teacher must know if the young reader can perform effectively in the complex world of printed material. Does the reader find the sources important to him, and then find the truly significant ideas within them? Most important, once the proper reading material has been selected, does the reader have the staying power to follow through on long intricate passages? The ability to do this is the mark of a true reader. Any worthwhile evaluation must be predicated on this concept of reading. Fortunately, each student reveals the answer to these questions through his daily performance in IRP. Evaluation becomes a self-evaluation for many. Observant teachers, actually know each student's performance in reading better than in more conventional reading programs. It is a relatively easy matter for the experienced teacher to observe the relative ratio of talent and effort. It is the interaction of these two attributes which must ultimately form the basis of any meaningful evaluation.

SUMMARY

Two major concepts are considered in this presentation. First, a distinction is made between two forms which have resulted from the thrust toward individualized instruction in education. Prescriptive individualization associated with IPI is distinguished from a personal form of individual instruction found in the more typical individualized Reading Program (IRP). Features which differentiate the two forms of individualization are outlined. Yet the structure which is usually highlighted as the contrasting factor between the two forms is challenged. The difference is not one of structure (prescribed) versus unstructure (personal) but rather one of the nature of structure. The personal component of IRP can only be realized through a rather delicate structure which rests in the mind of the teacher. The second major concept, a delineation of the structure needed to succeed in IRP, consumes the balance of the presentation.